



"The most mighty and powerful thing we, as God's people, can do for creation is to honour the voices of those who are vulnerable and work to protect and restore what God called 'good'."

How might you ensure that you are listening to the voices of those whose lives are being challenged by the climate crisis?

The year 2020 has been filled with ups and downs and uncertainties, but I am grateful to be alive today and to share my story with all of you.

I am Jessica Bwali from Zambia and I am a journalist by profession.

This year will go down in my life as one of the years that pushed me to the wall. At the beginning of the year, I had laid down a number of resolutions that I was hoping I could achieve by the end of the year. But barely three months into the year, the corona pandemic struck, and we went into quarantine! To make things even more difficult, depressing, and stressful for me, I was away from my family and friends, living in Germany.

Yet, in the midst of the pain and grief the whole world was going through due to the pandemic, I saw hope. I saw people coming together, helping one another; people sharing what they had. I saw medical personals working tirelessly to see to it that they saved lives. I saw people praying for one another and doing their part to handle the pandemic. To me, that meant there was still hope for a better tomorrow, despite the losses and the pain.

Mid 2020, I was picked as the African ambassador for the British Methodist COP-26 campaign. This means I will represent my country and the Methodist Africa region on issues of climate crisis. The fact that I'll do this with fellow young people from Italy, Fiji and Britain is the icing on the cake.

Being part of this campaign is not something I saw coming, but being part of it is definitely one of the most amazing things that has happened to me this year. Championing climate justice is close to my heart and I hope that, by the end of this campaign I, together with my fellow youths on this project, will have contributed fully.

Looking at 2020 and everything that has come with it I can safely say that, despite the ups and downs, God is with us. God is there at the heart of our passionate fight for climate justice. God is there as comfort and strength and hope – in the face of coronavirus and in the face of the climate emergency.

To everyone reading this, I wish you the best and to those who have lost loved ones or who are not in a good space due to the corona pandemic - I send my love to all of you. Do not lose HOPE.

- Jessica Bwali, COP26 Campaign Worker, Zambia

In 2020, the world has been upturned by an unexpected disaster which has consumed our attention. And yet, the world continues face a disaster on a greater scale. Communities all across the global south continue to be disproportionately affected by the climate crisis. Those who are frequently the least responsible for the causing the pollution that is destroying our planet. And yet, many find their lives disrupted by the unbalancing of the creation upon which they depend. In a year that has been dominated by worry, it is vital to remember the urgency of the climate crisis, particularly for those for whom the crisis isn't a distant future but a current reality.

In the places across our shared home which find themselves on the frontlines of the climate crisis, there is hope to be found in the work of climate activists such as Jessica. Her care and concern for the Earth can encourage us to value the Earth more; seeing it as a testament to the creative and mighty power of the One who created it. As Jessica's story tells, Covid-19 allowed her to see people coming together in moments of crisis and distress despite pain and loss. It would be invaluable to the efforts of climate activists if individuals and communities channelled this same attitude of care and concern for others when acting for the protection of the planet.

When the prophet Isaiah declares that the coming leader for God's people will be named **'mighty God'**, he calls attention to the impressive power and strength of God. The mighty work of God is evident long before Isaiah's prophecy, particularly when we consider God's crafting and sculpting of the Earth in Genesis. Genesis 1 tells us of a God who creates a 'good' Earth from a formless void and who delicately and carefully fills the Earth with things which enables life to flourish. From nothing, God created everything, and into it breathed life.

But this promise of a **'mighty God'** is contrasted by Isaiah's prophecy that it won't be a King or warrior coming to deliver God's people, but a child. All the might of the creator commanded not by strength and power, but by humility. God's might incarnated to show honor even to the smallest, and most vulnerable among us.

Just as God incarnate chose not strength but vulnerability to carry his might, where might we look today and see God present among those most vulnerable? When the voices of our brothers and sisters in the global south tell us that the world around them is rapidly changing, we ought to act to rectify what we have been complicit in. God is present in the lands and communities where the climate crisis is most apparent and God shares in their sorrow and vulnerability. The most mighty and powerful thing we, as God's people, can do for creation is to honour the voices of those who are vulnerable and work to protect and restore what God called 'good'.

How often do you consider that God's care and thought went into the creation of life that isn't human and that God sees that life as 'good'? Would you treat the Earth and non-human life differently knowing that creation is our mighty God's 'good' work? As we approach the start of a new year, how might you be challenged to mirror the humility of God and honor those across the world who are most vulnerable to the climate crisis?

Questions

- When was the last time you appreciated God's Earth and felt connected to it?
- How might you/your church community act to protect the Earth from harm?
- How might you/your church community ensure that you are listening to the voices of those whose lives are being challenged by the climate crisis?

Prayer

Mighty God

The skill of your hand is apparent throughout creation.

We ask forgiveness for all of the times we have depreciated Your Earth, our home,

And we ask that you walk alongside us as we commit to tread lightly upon the world.

Remind us that the Earth is the work of a mighty and powerful Creator,

Who chose to live amongst us in the home you created.

We pray for communities whose homes are being destroyed
as a consequence of our actions,

Be with them as they mourn unbearable losses

And be with us, as we accept our role in their suffering.

Strengthen us as we seek to reconcile humanity with your wonderful Earth.

Amen.

Mollie Pugmire is one of the Methodist COP26 Campaign workers. She is working with the Methodist Church in Britain on taking climate action in 2021.

